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Soviet spy defects with terrorism secrets

By Bill Gertz
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A defector from the Soviet military intelligence service — the GRU — has offered at first hand the details of a Soviet link to terrorism in the West, an Athens newspaper reported.

He further supplied Western security services with information on Soviet espionage activities in Greece and Soviet clandestine involvement in international labor movements, the "peace" movement

and the media, the Athens Star reported, citing "sources with access to his testimony."

A senior U.S. official told The Washington Times yesterday that the Athens newspaper report is "on the right track."

A Pentagon official in Washington confirmed that Sergei Bokhane defected May 25, but would not elaborate on the details of what information he was supplying "at this time."

Mr. Bokhane held the position of first secretary attached to the Soviet

Embassy in Athens, and operated as the deputy director of the GRU residency in Athens, the newspaper said.

He is believed to be in the custody of both the British and U.S. intelligence services.

While charges of Soviet involvement in international terrorism have been made before — always angrily denied — the defector was said to have first-hand knowledge of these operations, the newspaper said.

According to the Star, Mr. Bok-

hane, 44, supplied details of covert Soviet support for terrorist activities in the West. It said these operations fall under the GRU's purview, rather than under the direction of the companion Soviet intelligence service, the KGB.

Mr. Bokhane spent seven years in Greece as the GRU's No. 2 man in Athens and is considered an expert on Soviet intelligence activities in Greece, the newspaper said. He was sent to Greece under a Moscow directive to "aggravate" Greece's relations with the West after the fall

of the military junta, which ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974. In 1978 he returned to Moscow to stay until 1982, when he was posted once more to Athens.

Denials of Soviet complicity in state-sponsored terrorism, meanwhile, were never angrier than the Soviet denials yesterday of accusations of "state-sponsored terrorism" made Monday by President Reagan. Pravda, the newspaper of the Soviet Communist party, even seemed to take offense in behalf of religious orthodoxy, which it otherwise routinely denounces.

Pravda decried Mr. Reagan's "attempt to attach the tag of international terrorism" to all nations which the newspaper said were fighting for political and economic self-determination.

"Against this background, Reagan's claim that the United States is loved all over the world and that for millions of people it remains a shining city on a hill sound particularly sacrilegious," Pravda said.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi reacted furiously, too, defending the five nations — Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua — identified as terrorist sponsors. A Libyan radio called the five nations the only states opposed to American efforts to "swallow the world."

The radio broadcast, monitored in London, referred to the president as "terrorist Reagan" and said the five nations were opposed to "American policies that seek to contain the world... [and] guarantee U.S. superiority in the future nuclear confrontation with the opposite side."

In Havana, Fidel Castro lashed

out at President Reagan, too, calling him a "madman," and charged the U.S. with organizing "American terrorism." Mr. Castro told a press conference in the Cuban capital that President Reagan was "the worst terrorist in the history of mankind." The president, he said, took all his ideas from "the era of Buffalo Bill."

Against the backdrop of these angry recriminations, official U.S. sources say, the disclosures of the

Athens newspaper seemed likely to stir up a furious Soviet propaganda barrage against the defection of their agent in Greece.

Controversy was already growing on Capitol Hill. Sen. Richard Lugar of Indiana, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who has just returned from a trip through Central America, predicted last night that "action is coming" against supporters of worldwide terrorism.

He told interviewer George F. Will on ABC News, who asked why the administration has merely limited itself to talking tough, that "the president is setting the legal stage and framework for that action."

Mr. Lugar said he had "no doubt at all" that the Soviet Union and Syria have engaged in state-sponsored terrorism as well, though they were not on Mr. Reagan's list of the five nations that he characterized as "Murder, Inc."

In a letter to the president, Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic minority leader, urged President Reagan yesterday to strengthen U.S. intelligence against terrorists and to ask Congress for whatever additional money is needed to do it.

But Rep. Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill of Massachusetts, the Democratic majority leader, called the president's designation of the five nations "a touchy thing." He reminded reporters of CIA participation in preparation of an "assassination manual" for rebels in Nicaragua, but did not elaborate.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, told CBS News he did not believe the nations named by Mr. Reagan were engaged in a conspiracy against the United States.